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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 001466

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NACB](#) [IS](#) [LE](#) [MY](#)  
SUBJECT: OIC RELEASES STATEMENTS ON LEBANON AND PALESTINE

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 1458

Classified By: Political Section Chief Mark D. Clark  
for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) released two documents concerning Lebanon and Palestine following their August 3 meeting in Putrajaya, Malaysia (reftel). While both documents reiterated old rhetoric condemning Israel and predictably called for an immediate ceasefire, the conference also adopted Lebanon's Seven Point Plan en toto, including the call for the Lebanese government and its "legitimate military" to gain full control over its territory. Consensus requirements tempered the one-sided documents, and only Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei agreed to commit troops to a UN led peacekeeping force. According to one attendee, internal discussion focused on fears that public demonstrations would get out of control and that the conflict was sowing the seeds of more terrorism. Although Malaysia joined the loud and over the top rhetoric against Israel, it also distanced itself and the OIC from Ahmadinejad's statements calling for Israel's destruction, while the OIC's Palestine statement reaffirmed support for a permanent two-state solution. The OIC's endorsement of the seven-point plan, particularly support for extending Lebanese government authority over its own land, may open opportunities for some common ground with Muslim leaders. End Summary.

Mere statements of condemnation  
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¶2. (C) At the conclusion of the August 3 Meeting of the Friends of the Chair of the 10th Islamic Summit Conference (reftel), the OIC released two consensus documents: the Putrajaya Declaration on the Situation in Lebanon; and the Putrajaya Declaration on the Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Contrary to Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's calls to stop "issuing mere statements of condemnation for the violence" the meeting and declarations did little more.

Declaration on Lebanon  
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¶3. (C) The declaration on Lebanon repeated previous calls for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon; unequivocally condemned Israel as the aggressor; did not mention Hizbollah; largely avoided Abdullah's opening rhetoric of a Middle East plot; and wholly endorsed Lebanon's Seven Point Plan rather than produce new recommendations for creating peace. Again, the declaration fell far short of Abdullah's call for new commitments and action in his opening speech to the Meeting

of Friends. There was no general call for OIC members to contribute troops to a peacekeeping mission and there were no specific pledges of assistance. The adoption of the Lebanese Seven Point Plan was the most balanced statement of the conference and called for the Lebanese government to extend its authority over its territory through its own legitimate armed forces. An insider on Malaysian Foreign Minister Hamid Albar's personal staff admitted to us that the conferees were not able to come to a consensus on stronger language in the declaration on Lebanon, nor on a pledge to send peacekeeping troops to the region, noting as the press did, that only Brunei and Indonesia were willing to join Malaysia in committing peacekeepers. He characterized Abdullah's opening remarks as strong but the final declarations "were much weaker."

#### A few words on Palestine

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¶4. (C) Similarly, the declaration on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories provided little more than a restatement of previous positions. Predictably, the members condemned Israel for its occupation and called for a complete and unconditional withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. They called for the world to accept the outcome of the recent Palestinian elections, and endorsed the two-state solution and roadmap for peace. The declaration on Palestine was only half the length of the one on Lebanon, as Palestine apparently played less on the minds of those in attendance. There were no new ideas or courses of action regarding Palestine, and none of the countries in attendance made any new pledges of assistance.

#### Action and reaction

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¶5. (C) Following the Meeting of Friends, Abdullah held bilateral talks with leaders from Iran, Turkey, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Following these encounters, Abdullah advised the press that he would send a personal letter to President Bush to urge him to use his influence to bring an immediate ceasefire. In addition, he would explain the position of the OIC and Malaysia on the crisis in Lebanon. Malaysia's Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar also made a series of media appearances to explain the results of the Meeting of Friends. Hamid made a point to distance the OIC from Iranian president Ahmadinejad's calls for the destruction of Israel, deeming those remarks Ahmadinejad's own views and not the position of the OIC. Local newspapers all carried a summary of the conference declarations on the front page, and most papers headlined feature photos of Abdullah and Ahmadinejad shaking hands. One daily repeated a New York Times editorial that called into question Iran's actions and motives related to Lebanon.

#### Leaders concerned over the Muslim street

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¶6. (C) An Embassy contact at the Pakistani High Commission who attended the conference advised us that "all the leaders were really concerned about public agitation (connected with events in Lebanon) in their home countries." Many commented that "It's getting difficult to control the streets." Indonesian President Yudhoyono reportedly made especially strong statements in condemnation of Israel and referenced the large demonstrations hitting the streets in response to Israel's actions in Lebanon. Our contact further commented that nearly all the countries were concerned that "Israel is trying to expand the conflict beyond Lebanon to other countries in the region." It was further mentioned that other OIC members discussed sending peacekeepers to southern Lebanon, but only under the auspices of the United Nations, and "only if Hizbollah agrees." Conferees expressed fear that the latest conflict was actually "sowing the seeds of more terrorism."

Comment

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17. (C) The OIC's statement on Lebanon was obviously and disappointingly one-sided in tone and condemnation of Israel.

However, the seven-point plan, particularly its call for Lebanese government to extend its authority over its own territory, does not appear to be so far from what we are working to achieve. The OIC's endorsement of the plan may open opportunities for some common ground with Muslim leaders.  
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